



LESSON SNAPSHOT

BOTTOM LINE:

God can bring joy from sadness.

OBJECTIVE:

Kids will learn that God can turn our sorrow into joy.

KEY PASSAGE:

Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-6, Sarah Laughs

MEMORY VERSE:

*"The Lord takes good care of all those who fall. He lifts up all those who feel helpless."
Psalm 145:14 (NIV)*

SUMMARY:

When the angel said that Sarah would have a child, she laughed. FAIL. Then she lied about it. FAIL AGAIN. One year later, Sarah was the mother of Isaac. God turned her laughter of doubt into joyful laughter.

SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

Thank you for turning our failures into joy.

In Jesus' name,

Amen

LARGE GROUP LESSON

BOTTOM LINE:

God can bring joy from sadness.

OBJECTIVE:

Kids will learn that God can turn our sorrow into joy.

KEY PASSAGE:

Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-6, Sarah Laughs

INTRO:

Many of the fail videos we see online are posted by the very people we see failing in the videos. You can find videos of people falling off roofs, falling short on athletic stunts, choking on hot peppers, and doing all kinds of crazy things, and if you look at who shared the video, most of the time, it's the person in the video.

It seems strange that the person who would be most embarrassed by a fail video would be the one to share it. Some of the people come away not only red-faced, but injured from their attempted fails. So why would they broadcast them to the whole world? For the same reason America's Funniest Videos became so hugely popular – money!

From the very beginning of the fail video craze, long before they were called fails, people were willing to share their painful, embarrassing videos in the hopes of winning money. America's Funniest Videos gives cash prizes away on every show, and there's a grand prize winner who makes even more money at the end of every season. YouTube has also made it possible to turn fails into cash. If you get enough followers, and if your video gets enough views, you can make some big money with the ads YouTube attaches to your videos.

Long story short: people share their worst failures and most embarrassing moments in the hopes they can turn something bad into something good. It might have hurt when you tried to shovel snow off your roof and ended up sliding off the roof yourself into a snowbank, but a big wad of cash will turn that sadness and pain into true happiness!

God can do something similar with our sadness and pain, but what God does is so much better than giving us temporary happiness. God wants to give us joy. Joy is not an emotion. Joy is knowing that God loves us and is watching out for us. Joy is knowing we can trust God in all things.

LARGE GROUP LESSON

Joy is seeing God turn our sad circumstances into happy ones. Today's Bible story shows us how God took the fails – and the sadness – of Abraham's wife Sarah and turned them into joy.

READ GENESIS 18:1-15, 21:1-6

MAIN POINT:

Sarah was married to Abraham, the man whose fails we read about last week. If you remember, God had promised Abraham to give him a son and turn his offspring into a mighty nation.

Abraham's visitor was just repeating that promise when Sarah overheard him – and laughed. Then Sarah lied when the messenger called her out for laughing, turning one fail into two.

Sarah's laughter was understandable. She was an old woman. She was much too old to have a baby. She could just as easily have broken down in tears, hearing a stranger say that she could have a baby because she truly believed it was impossible. Only God could have blessed her with a baby in her old age, and God did just that.

Sarah may have failed, but that didn't prevent God from blessing her. He turned her sorrow into joy by fulfilling His promise. Sarah's fails show us that we can look to God when we are sad, and God will turn our sadness into joy as well.

DRIVE IT HOME:

Fail videos allow us to laugh at others and laugh at ourselves. They remind us we are human. They remind us no one is perfect, and that it's okay to fall on our faces. They give us permission to laugh at ourselves, and in a way, that's bringing joy out of sorrow. You can sit and dwell on your mistakes and your failures, or you can look back and laugh at them.

Of course, it isn't always easy to laugh at our sorrows, and even when we laugh, there can be real pain below the surface. Sarah may have laughed at the idea of having a baby, but she was genuinely hurting. She had been married to Abraham many, many years. She loved him, and it broke her heart that she could never have a child with him. She wanted that more than anything, and it was the one thing that gave her the most sadness in her life.

We all have times we feel that depth of sorrow. We fall short on a goal. We miss out on an opportunity we wanted. We lose a loved one. It's hard to laugh in those moments. It's hard to trust that God can do anything to take away our sorrow. Sarah learned that God is trustworthy and will fulfill His promises.

LARGE GROUP LESSON

He can take our deepest sorrows and turn them into joy.

Fails can bring us laughter, but they can also bring us pain. Fails can remind us how human we are. They can bring us down. Whatever sadness or sorrow you may feel, God can transform that pain into joy. When you fail, give that failure to God. When you are hurt, give your pain to God. When you are sad, give your tears to God. Trust Him, and He will turn your sorrow into joy!

CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

Thank you for turning our failures into joy.

In Jesus' name,

Amen

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (K-2ND)

ICEBREAKER:

What is one silly thing you have done in the last week?

MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:

Psalm 145:14

Give all the kids a Bible. Then after you read the verse, give them the reference and see who can find it first in their Bible.

SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY:

Bring in a small basketball hoop like the one used in today's game, and have the kids try to make some trick shots of their own.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Read Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-6

Who came to visit Abraham and Sarah?

What did they tell Abraham about Sarah?

Why did Sarah laugh and lie about it?

How did God give Sarah joy?

What should we do when we feel sad?

SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

When we feel sad, please turn our sorrows into joy.

In Jesus' name,

Amen



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (3-5TH)

ICEBREAKER:

What is one silly thing you have done in the last week?

MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:

Psalm 145:14

Give all the kids a Bible. Then after you read the verse, give them the reference and see who can find it first in their Bible.

SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY:

Bring in a small basketball hoop like the one used in today's game, and have the kids try to make some trick shots of their own.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Read Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-6

What sorrow did Sarah feel?

Why did Sarah laugh about having a baby and lie about it?

How did God give Sarah joy?

Do you believe God can turn our fails into joy?

What should we do when we feel sad?

SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

When we feel sad, please turn our sorrows into joy.

In Jesus' name,

Amen